State of California
Department of Public Health

Center for Health Statistics
Vital Statistics Data Files Application
Instructions Page
01/28/10

INSTRUCTIONS TO COMPLETE APPLICATION FOR PURCHASE OF
VITAL STATISTICS DATA FILES

All birth files and files that include personal identifiers such as Names, Certificate Numbers, Addresses, Social Security Numbers or Mother's Maiden Name are confidential and require the approval of the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) and the Vital Statistics Advisory Committee (VSAC) to purchase.

BIRTH DATA FILES

- CPHS approval is required before you submit any application materials to VSAC. You can access information about CPHS and their approval process by calling (916) 326-6660, by e-mail cphs-mail@oshpd.ca.gov or on their website, http://www.oshpd.ca.gov/Boards/CPHS/researchers.html.

- After you receive your approval letter from CPHS, submit the following:

  1. A completed Vital Statistics Data Files Application
  2. The "Requisite Questions for Projects Involving Data Files
  3. Your approved CPHS research protocol
  4. The CPHS approval letter
  5. The appropriate payment - make all checks or money orders payable to California Department of Public Health

  Send all of the above to the address listed below.

- If additional information is required for your application package, you will be contacted by e-mail or by telephone. Failure to provide the requested information may result in a delay in processing your request.

- After your application package has been reviewed and approved by VSAC, your data files will be mailed to you on a CD. The CD-ROM files contain the data in American Standard Code Information Interchange (ASCII) format. These files are not comma-delimited. There is no software included and the files are not executable or searchable as is. The data must be uploaded into a statistical database package such as SAS or SPSS to search and or aggregate the data for use.

DEATH DATA FILES

- Submit the following:

  1. A completed Vital Statistics Data Files Application
  2. The "Requisite Questions for Projects Involving Data Files"
  3. The appropriate payment - make all checks or money orders payable to California Department of Public Health

  Send all of the above to the address listed below.

- After VSAC approval, your application materials will be forward to CPHS for their review and approval. You may be contacted by a CPHS member or be required to attend a CPHS meeting as part of the CPHS review.

State of California
Department of Public Health

Center for Health Statistics
Vital Statistics Data Files Application
Instructions Page
01/28/10

- After approval from both VSAC and CPHS, your data files will be mailed to you on a CD. The CD-ROM files contain the data in American Standard Code Information Interchange (ASCII) format. These files are not comma-delimited. There is no software included and the files are not executable or searchable as is. The data must be uploaded into a statistical database package such as SAS or SPSS to search and or aggregate the data for use.

VSAC MEETINGS

VSAC meetings are held every other monthly. The current meeting schedules and deadlines are available at our website www.cdph.ca.gov/services/boards/Pages/VSACMtgInfo.aspx.

PAYMENT AND MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

We cannot accept credit cards or purchase orders as a form of payment. Payment is required before data files can be released. If an invoice is needed in order to process a check, please contact the Office of Health Information and Research at the telephone number or e-mail listed above. Please do not mail checks or money orders without a copy of the application or an invoice.

Mail check or money order and copy of application or invoice to:

California Department of Public Health
Office of Health Information and Research
Attn: VSS – Data Processing Desk
P.O. Box 997410, MS 5103
Sacramento, CA 95899-7410

Phone: (916) 552-8095   Fax: (916) 650-6889
E-Mail: OHIR@cdph.ca.gov

Fed-Ex Deliveries: Fed-Ex deliveries are not accepted using the P.O. Box above. If you would like to Fed-Ex your completed application and payment, please call or e-mail for the physical location. If you would like the CDs delivered via Fed-Ex, you must supply your Fed-Ex account number or a credit card billing number.

The California Department of Public Health's Federal Taxpayer ID Number is 74-3204993.

Additional copies of this application can be downloaded from the Center for Health Statistics website at: www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohir.

State of California
Department of Public Health

Center for Health Statistics
Vital Statistics Data Files Application
Instructions Page
01/28/10

TYPES OF DATA FILES

Birth and Fetal Death Data files are compiled from the information reported on birth and fetal death certificates, including detailed demographic information related to the child, mother, and father, as well as medical data related to the event. Death Data files are compiled from the information reported on the death certificates, including detailed demographic information related to the decedent.

❑ Birth Statistical Master Files are the largest and most comprehensive of the birth data files. These files contain detailed demographic information related to the child, mother, and father, as well as medical data related to the birth.

❑ Birth Cohort File is a linked birth and death file that follows infants for the first year of life. The Cohort files contain linked birth, infant death, and fetal death data. There is no Cohort file for 1998.

❑ Fetal Death Statistical Master Files contain data obtained from fetal death certificates registered in California each year. These files contain demographic information related to the child, mother, and father, as well as medical data related to the fetal death. The medical data includes the underlying cause of the fetal death. Personal Identifiers on the Fetal Death Files are Names and Certificate Numbers. There are no other personal identifiers available on Fetal Death Files.

❑ Death Statistical Master Files are the largest and most comprehensive of the death data files.

❑ Death Public Use Files are subsets of the Death Statistical Master Files. The file structure and the variable coding methodology are designed to facilitate trend analysis and to simplify computer programming.

❑ Merged Death Files are subsets of the Death Statistical Master Files and contain the most commonly used variables. These files have a consistent record layout over all the years and are intended to facilitate long-term trend analysis and to simplify computer programming. These files do not contain Zip Code or Mother's Maiden Name.

❑ Multiple Cause of Death Files are created by the National Center for Health Statistics and include underlying, immediate, intermediate, and contributing causes of death and demographic data. Each record may include up to 20 causes of death derived from California death certificates. All causes of death are coded according to the International Classification of Diseases. These files include certificate numbers, but do not include names or other personal identifiers. These files can be linked to other death files using the certificate number.